

# Praying For All The Saints

by Tim Conway

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**Scripture:** James 5:16, Ephesians 6:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:19, Matthew 7:7, 1 John 5:14, Colossians 4:2, Romans 8:26, Matthew 25:40

**Topics:** "Intercessory Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Well, this one last time, let's open up to Ephesians chapter 6. This is my last message for now concerning spiritual warfare. We're wrapping up this section. And so maybe we'll pick up in verse 14.

Stand therefore, having fastened down the belt of truth. This is Ephesians chapter 6, verse 14. Stand.

That's what we're being called to do. Verse 11, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand. That's the idea.

Verse 13, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore. So we've got the belt of truth, 14, breastplate of righteousness, 14, shoes for your feet, verse 15, the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Verse 16, shield of faith, 17, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And then we looked at this last week, praying at all times, and as a participle, it modifies what goes before. This is to, we're to be immersed in this prayer at all times, in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication to that end, keep alert, with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that the words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

Now I'm just going to tell you right up front here, this sermon, the material that we deal with today, it can change your life and the life of this church radically, if God will get a hold of you with regards to this. I find it interesting when I listen to Lloyd-Jones preach, it's almost like anything he's dealing with at the time, he tells you is the most important thing. I understand why he says that, but I really feel like this is an absolutely essential message for the church.

Now, let's look at verse 18, because verses 18, 19, and 20 are where I want us to focus our attention. I believe that in verse 18, you all have the word supplication twice, and I don't think anybody here has a New American Standard. Anybody have that? So there's an NAS back there.

Okay, you've got petition. Now supplication, let's think about that. Most of our translations, it's the same thing, petition, supplication, supplication, it's not a word we use a whole lot.

It's not like it's exactly foreign to us, it's just not common, meaning we don't use it in everyday language, supplication, basically it's asking God for something. It's making a request, that's what it's all about. We could also translate this plead, or entreat, or petition, even beg, and it's a strong word.

One of my lexicons says this, that which is asked with urgency, based on a presumed need. Now brethren, I know we're a needy people, God knows we're a needy people. I mean, what are we talking about here? We have to remember the context the whole time.

When we're talking about making supplication and we're asking for things, we need to remember this is the cosmic battle. This is against spiritual powers. This is the atmosphere in which we are making these supplications.

And look, the Lord knows we desperately need Him. He knows that we need desperately the strength of His might, which is where this whole thing started out with back in verse 10. This is the word that basically tells us to look up.

We need to get our eyes on Him. If you find yourself going through some kind of especially difficult, especially trying season in your Christian life, you know what the Lord says, you know what He's saying to us here, make supplication to me, don't give me any rest. You need to ask me for what you need.

Listen, if you belong to Him, that blood of Christ entitles you access. So look to Him for everything, all your needs, all your necessities. Remember, the strength of His might.

He is absolutely limitless in His power, His resources are infinite. But here's the thing I want to emphasize. Paul doesn't start with supplication in verse 18.

And we looked a little bit at this last week, but I want to take this up again. He says all prayer, praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication, all prayer, all aspects of prayer should characterize your prayer life, along with this supplication. What's my point here? Christian, if you're not careful, your prayer life can just become a laundry list of give me, give me, give me.

Where, I would say this, look, when we're talking about spiritual warfare, there's times the devil's upon us, we need help immediately. And you may need to ask for something on the spot. I recognize that.

But if all your prayers are characterized, you can think, you don't have to tell me, but do an inventory of your prayer life. If your prayer life is basically the first words thought in your head or spoken in your mouth

when you go to God in prayer, are requests, then you're missing a massive part of communion with God by way of prayer. Because all prayer has to do with all these aspects that need to characterize.

Christian, don't run into God's presence all the time, simply saying, here's what I need, here's what I want. Like sitting on Santa's lap at Christmas, a little kid, give me this, give me this, I want this, I want this. Brethren, that's bad.

There's more to our fellowship with God. Listen, in another letter, the same apostle writes this way, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication. There's prayer again, and all prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Or over in Colossians, another letter, continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving.

Let me tell you something, Ruby and I are going home to San Antonio, and in the U.S., we have a holiday we call Thanksgiving. President Lincoln started that back in the late 1800s. Thanksgiving.

It's the fourth Thursday of November. Well, here's the thing. Thanksgiving always falls on a Thursday, which means that in the whole history of our church back there in San Antonio, we have a prayer meeting the night before.

Thanksgiving Eve. GCC always has a prayer meeting. That is one of the services in the life of the church there that I look forward to that service probably as much or more than any other service in the life of the church.

And what we would do is we would get together, and we would just go around and we would ask everybody, what are you thankful for? Basically, that was the focus. How has God answered prayers in this last year? Who's been saved? What children have been born? Who got married? How has God worked in us and through us? And sometimes it's two hours, and you know, the more the church has grown, and we have everybody bring pumpkin pie and all sorts of things. That's a good night of eating.

But brethren, let me tell you something. We'll not only go around and have testimonies. It varies each year.

We do it a little bit different. Sometimes it'll just be open testimony. I'll say, just stand up and tell us what you're thankful for, and just let it kind of be a praise and adoration.

This is the thing that needs to be in our prayers, not just asking all the time. But you know, there's been some years where we've actually, it's just a matter of, let's everybody bow our head. We're just going to pass the microphone, and let it go around the room.

And I want everybody just to thank God for the things that they're most thankful for. Don't go on thanking God for a bunch of things you're not thankful for. The things that you're really grateful for.

And I've asked the church, no requests. Don't ask the Lord for anything tonight. Only thank Him and praise Him for what He's done.

And you know, we have Psalms, like Psalm 136. That's all it is. Do you know what I have found? It's almost impossible.

Inevitably, people go to asking the Lord for something. Now, I've pondered why that is. Why when we're really trying to do nothing but thank Him, why can't we do it? And I do understand we're a needy people.

And so, I grant that. That may be it. We're just such a ball of needs that we can't hardly not ask God for something.

But then there's also the concern that maybe it's because we don't thank God enough normally, and we're just not... Some people maybe just aren't wired to thank God. Some people aren't wired to offer up thanksgiving. Now, brethren, that's not a good thing.

Have you ever caught this? That when it talks about the depravity of man in Romans chapter 1, do you know what it says? It specifically says that although they knew God, they did not honor Him or give Him thanks. Hmm. Now, here's another thing.

All prayer. Do you know before you go to God with your needs, a great way to start prayer is confession? You just start thinking about the ways you failed the Lord before you pray. Because by the... You know, John tells us if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive those sins.

Confession. If you start the majority of your prayers exactly that way with confession, that can be massively helpful to your prayer life. Because you know what happens? When you start reciting your failures, approaching God, it's a reminder that you are a sinner, and you're going before a holy God.

And you know what? There's constantly a reminder on what basis you can approach Him. Because that's how you will start thinking. Because as you recite your sins, you think, you're like, wow, even after this long being a Christian, I've got that much dirt in my life.

And you begin to recognize how desperately you need the blood of Christ to approach Him. And you become aware of that. And look, even here, this is devil conquering.

Because that's what we're talking about. We're talking about the all prayer, praying in the Spirit, with this all prayer and supplication. And this has to do with our spiritual warfare.

Do you remember that it says in the book of Revelation that they conquered Him by the blood of the Lamb? Have you ever thought about what indeed that means? How do you conquer by the blood of the Lamb? I'll tell you this, we talk about the blood, nothing but the blood. What can wash away my sins? But do you ever have physically Christ's blood washing you? No, that's not what happens. How do you conquer by the blood? It's by faith in the blood.

And you see what happens when you begin to confess sins. You say, oh, I don't like to go there. That makes me feel bad and makes me feel miserable.

That's okay. Because you know what, when you start thinking, but I have access nevertheless because of the blood of Christ, then all of a sudden there's joy. You see, brethren, this is why we do this every Lord's Day.

Because it brings us back to this recognition that it was our transgressions, it was our iniquities. He was the man of sorrows, not for any violence or any impurity in Him. And so this is, we defeat Him by the blood of the Lamb.

And one of the things in confession, you will come back to that blood over and over. Or how about praise? Now brethren, praise. Coming to God, not just give me this and that and the other thing, but actually reciting His character, His victories in Scripture, His promises in Scripture.

Let me tell you something. You have probably heard me mention John Sytsma. He's one of my fellow elders.

He oversees the team in Kathmandu, Nepal. We have what we call our Women's Grace House over there. A lot of little girls and young ladies from both India and from Nepal.

A lot of them from dark paths, bad paths. Some of these girls are being rescued from the sex trade. We have had such demonic problems with these girls that neighbors have actually thought we were torturing the girls and that it must be a brothel and our facility was raided over there.

And the more they inquired with the girls and they looked into it, they actually issued John all the proper permits for a non-profit. And some of the guys that actually did the raiding wanted to put their kids there to be schooled. In the end, it's like God so vindicated us.

But let me tell you something. The demonic issues they have over there, John, some of the other guys over there, they have communicated with me and some of the interaction there was recorded. They'd send them in WhatsApp messages.

It is, if you're not accustomed to this kind of thing, it can be alarming. And John has made so many appeals over the years. Let me tell you something.

The Hindu festivals there tend to agitate these demonic manifestations as much as anything. And they've got one coming up. It's right now.

They go into a season of prayer and fasting prior to these Hindu festivals because they know what kind of demonic interaction they get. They say, what are you talking? Oh, they see things, they hear things. These girls become possessed.

And all sorts of just hideous screams. Do you know what they have found? In all the ways, all these appeals, all the prayer, all the fasting, do you know what they have found to be one of the most effectual means of defeating the devil in the midst of these crisis times? They ask, and they should, and they do. But it's when their praying breaks out into praise and singing.

That has been as effectual as anything. Look, we're talking about defeating the devil here. And the fact is, when they burst into song and praise and adoration, that seems to shake the foundations of hell as much as anything.

You ever read in the Psalm that it says that God is holy and He's enthroned on the praises of Israel? Something to that. God comes. God comes in power.

God comes in might, where the praises of God exist. We don't want to underestimate that. Don't let your prayers be these stale, constant, just, the world's like that.

The world will pray when they're in dire need. But this is all prayer. There's more to it than just the supplication.

Now, look at verse 18 again. Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication, to that end, keep alert. Or if you've got the King James, New King James being watchful, I believe is what you have.

Keep alert, watchful. Now, think with me about this. There's an enemy.

Prayerfulness and watchfulness go together. Now, I don't know if you've connected that. You've, undoubtedly, you've seen it in Scripture.

But have you really connected it in your mind, that we have an enemy, we're in a battle, and the way to stay alert is through prayer? Look, I have no confidence that people who regularly miss prayer meetings are even aware there's an enemy. When I don't see that kind of desperation, when I don't see that kind of watchfulness in people, where it's the kind of thing you've got professing Christians and they can, you know, take it or leave it mindset with regards to the corporate prayer of the church. It tells me something about where these people are at in their, just in their thinking with regards to an awareness of the enemy.

Look, dead and sleepy prayers don't translate into battle-ready soldiers. Christian, I just ask you this. Are you alert? Are you on the edge of your seat when it comes to this? Are you aware? Is there a watchfulness in your life? That's the idea.

The fear is that some, the fear is that you have professing Christians that don't live and they don't pray as if there was a war. The wartime mentality seems to be missing. It's like they're walking around and life as usual.

It's like, can you imagine a soldier? He's out on the battlefield and he's sleeping. He's not alert. He's not watchful.

He's out there sleeping. Can you imagine? You know, you ever have one of those bad naps where you felt, you just laid down. You wanted to have like a 20-minute nap, but you ended up sleeping like 20 minutes.

And when you woke up, it was bad. You know what that feels like? And you get awakened and I don't know, the phone rings or the doorbell goes off or somebody hollers for you to get up. And it's a bad nap.

You don't feel refreshed. And you know, right at the beginning, it's like, am I awake? Am I asleep? Am I in a dream? And you know, you can get people out on the battlefield like that. You can imagine a soldier, you shake the guy and you wake him up and for a moment, he's rubbing the things out of his eyes and he doesn't know, am I in the dream or am I in the battle or what? You know what this is saying? We need to be like sentinels who know an enemy's coming.

It's not just you're at your post and you're thinking, well, you know, he might come or might not. You know, if you were in World War II and you were on sentry duty, well, he might show up, he might not. I'm just going to be aware in case he comes.

Brethren, you know what Scripture tells us? He is coming. And we're supposed to be like watchmen on the wall that are watching over the city in the dead of night. And there's an enemy out there.

That's the idea. Our hearts need to be alive with prayer. Why? Spiritual enemies.

They're near. We need men and women in the church that take this seriously, who day and night are looking out for the attack of the enemy. The enemy is going to come.

And Christian, you don't want to walk around with your head in the clouds. Because you know what? We've got a lot of Christians. A lot of Christians.

And you know what Scripture says? You're not to be wrapped up in the thorns that choke. Because what happens is you get the cares of this world and the anxieties of this world and the stuff of this world, and you can get lost in it. You're trying to make your life secure and safe.

And you're trying to get money. And you're trying to do this and try that. And I recognize there's a place for money in the Christian life.

But you know what can happen? You get so involved in that, that you lose sight of the fact that there's even a battle out there. This is success and comfort. And all the while, you're just oblivious to the existence, the presence of all these dark forces that Paul is telling us about here.

He's saying there are indeed principalities and powers and rulers and these cosmic forces. And you don't want to fall asleep to these realities. Because they're coming.

They're real. And brethren, the thing is, we can just become unaware that demons are even trying to destroy little girls over in Camp Mandu. What? I go to my job, and I've got money in the bank account, and I'm trying to put food on the table, and what are you talking about? Demons over in Camp Mandu? You just get to the place where I'm not even aware there is such a battle.

I'm not even really watching. Well, this is what it says. We need to watch and pray like we believe that there is indeed an enemy out there.

Now notice, now we're getting to the heart of this thing. Notice at the end of verse 18, making supplication or petition if you've got the NAS, but making supplication for all the saints and also for me. That the words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I'm an ambassador in chains and I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

Do you realize what's happening at the end of 18 and 19 and 20? If we're honest about this, the emphasis of most of these three verses have to do with intercessory prayer. What's that? What's intercessory prayer? It's praying for others. That's the emphasis here.

You see it? Making supplication for all the saints. Now don't forget the context. This is spiritual warfare.

Why ought I to be praying for other Christians? What's that all about? I mean the apostle's speaking about spiritual battles against these cosmic powers. With all my armor on and here I am ready. He says, He told me be ready to stand.

Doing all to stand. Put on all this armor. Get it on.

Now here I am. I got all my armor on. And I'm not only to pray for me.

The primary emphasis here is we're told to pray for one another. Why? Well the answer is that we're all engaged in the same battle. You see there needs to be a recognition as I'm staying on the alert and I'm like the central.

You know what? I'm not just watching out for me. I'm not just watching for the devil coming against me. The principalities and powers working their schemes against me.

What he's actually saying is I need to be on the guard for you. That's what's happening here. We're supposed to be making supplication for all the saints.

And the issue is that we're all subject to the same attacks. The same problems. The same difficulties.

You are exposed to the same difficulties that I am. And I am exposed to the same devil you are exposed to. And the same kind of battles.

Now listen. This is where this gets really important. You know one of the devil's tactics is to get you to think you're in this all by yourself.

What you're experiencing no one else is experiencing. You've got these difficulties. You know we can get to thinking like that.

These struggles. Now listen. If you're a Christian you've got struggles.

If you're a Christian you've got an enemy. This enemy very specifically in scripture it says he targets Christians. He's furious and he's made war with the offspring of the woman.

Those who keep the commandments bear the testimony of Christ. That's you. If you're a genuine Christian I know he's after you.

And I know that his forces, his henchmen are targeting you. And how do they target you? The same way they target me. And see none of us is on an island by ourselves here.

And that's why we need to make supplication. But the devil can get us thinking very much that this whole thing is entirely personal and I'm all alone. And you know what if you start listening to him? You know what happens? You can sit over there in your little corner and you can feel woe is me.

Listen. Walk in the Christian. It's through many tribulations that you're going to enter the kingdom.

Tribulations. I know life is going to be difficult. And you know what happens in the difficulties? We can feel like oh how unusually hard it is for me.

And you can begin to feel sorry for yourselves. And you can get cast down. And you know what? This is not something that's simply happening to you.

If you've experienced hardships in your life, know full well so have the rest of us. Now it may be true that I may be given to be tried in areas not exactly like you. But you know what? There's somebody out there that's being tried just like you are.

There's somebody that's lived past generations. They've come and gone. Christians all along, it's the same enemy.

And his tactics are the same. They haven't changed. That's why you need to forget about yourself at times.

Your prayers need to be geared towards other people. You can't just sit feeling sorry for yourselves. And Satan's great tactic is just to convince us that we're all by ourselves.

But you know what happens the moment we realize I'm not all by myself? And this is one of the ways that our trials, you know, when we're in a trial that does seem to be pretty unique, and then somebody else walks up and says, I've been where you are. That can be extremely helpful. Because suddenly it gives us this encouragement.

I am not all by myself. Other people have walked through this. Other people have survived this.

Other people have battled the devil right here. And you see, our trouble is that too often we tend to view our problems in such a personal sense. You know, I think about my problems, and my difficulties, and my fears, and my disappointments.

And the result is that we can become entirely self-centered, introspective, and then you're defeated. Paul says no. Do you not realize that those other Christians are experiencing the same battles? They're subject to the same discouragements that you are.

What does he say? Pray for them. You need to intercede for them. Supplication for all the saints.

That's what's being said here. How we need this. See, we tend to be so individualistic, and we just don't often regard, or stay tuned in to where other people are at in the spiritual conflict.

You know, this is a personal battle. This is a personal problem. No, it's not.

The devil attacks the whole church. And you know what the devil knows? He knows what that truth that's said there in the book of Ecclesiastes. You've got a threefold cord.

It is not easily broken. And he recognizes when the church is corded together, and we're united together, and we're praying for one another, that is not an easily broken cord. He recognizes that.

He knows when the church comes together, it's united together, and it's praying for each other. That's bad for him. We can get to where we think of no one else.

It's always my problem. I see this in the church. You get around certain people.

They will not ask you how you're doing. They don't act like they even care what's happening in your life. It's their problem.

They're always talking about it. They're always moaning over it. They're always thinking about it.

They're always praying about it. And the truth is, people like that, they rarely pray for other people. And Paul says, don't do that.

Don't be forever looking at yourself and concentrating on yourself. He says, consider others in the church. Consider other churches.

Consider missionaries in faraway places. Consider Christians in persecuted places. Listen, Job said, this is how he stuck out to me.

Now, he uses this with regards to people that were suffering, maybe financial problems, or they were hungry. They needed physical things. But he said this, I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know.

That's a good principle. One of the things we want to be finding out in each other's lives is where are the weaknesses, where are the battles, and how can we be praying. And we want to just pray.

One of the things I want you to recognize here, but look very carefully at verse 18 right at the end. Do you see anything there that says it's the pastor's responsibility to pray for the flock? I don't see it. Now, me as one of you, I have the same responsibility that you have.

But you know one of the things that I see? One of the things I see oftentimes is churches that have an expectation for the pastors to do what actually the Bible tells the whole church they have a responsibility to do. There are some things in the Bible like equipping the saints for the work of ministry that falls pretty uniquely on me. From a teaching standpoint, I need to be equipping you for the ministry.

Not me for the ministry, you for the ministry. That means serving. And one of the ways you can serve, one of the ways you can pour yourselves out for one another is by not just thinking, oh, you know, the pastor.

Should the pastor be praying for everybody in the flock? Yeah. Should you? Based on this? You better believe it. And see, I'm just one of the flock.

I sit in the back row. I'm one of the pew sitters. Don't call on me to do this.

No, that's exactly what you're being called upon to do. We have a responsibility for one another. One responsibility is precisely this.

Brethren, do you recognize this is one of the greatest ways? We read in 1 John, true Christians, you love the brethren. One of the greatest ways you can love the brethren is by praying for them. If you're not praying for the brethren, you can talk about love, but it's pretty sparse if that's not a reality there.

Brethren, you're not in this battle alone. Your brother, your sister. You can look sideways right now or you can turn your head behind me.

You can look at the brethren. You can see their faces. You know their names.

The reality is that we're all in this thing together. By the way, you know, one of the things, some churches, they can really be thinking, you know, a pastor that needs to do that. Let me tell you something, that very pastor that you may think needs to be doing all these different things that actually the Bible says that the whole church needs to be doing.

Sometimes you need to recognize that that guy that stands up there in the pulpit, he may be the guy that's closest to the edge of going over. He may be the guy that's ready to crumble. You just, you never know.

Now look, I want to talk straight with you. I'm typically not somebody to beat around the bush. We've had some prayer meetings where we've had some folks that have asked for prayer concerning assurance.

If you've been in the prayer meetings, you know that. There's some people that attend the church that have said, you know, please pray for me. I like assurance.

You know what can happen? And I think if all was known and told, it's not just it can happen, it does happen and it is happening. But you know what can happen? You go to a prayer meeting, you hear that. The way you may think about praying it, for it that night, but there you are.

And you've got your own problems. You've got your own life. And so what happens? Well, you forget about the person.

You forget about the fact that they lack assurance. Why would you do that? Why would you forget? Well, because I got my own things in my life. Or you know what happens? You're the one that lacks assurance and you feel attacked.

You've got doubts ringing in your ears. And what happens? Everyone's attitude separately is, woe is me. I'm the one that lacks assurance, woe is me.

Or I'm the one that doesn't lack assurance, they lack assurance, but woe is me because I got other problems. I mean, that's what happens a lot of times. And so you know what? We each feel alone in the corner, all by ourselves.

You're thinking about your problems. You're groaning over them or fretting over them. And at the end of the day, you can become so consumed that you don't think about anyone else.

Listen, listen. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. Do you know what I fear can happen with people that struggle with assurance? They don't think about other people.

They get lost in that. They get lost in that dark cloud. But you know, and this goes for everybody, that one of the paths to joy and peace in the Christian life is really pouring out your life in love.

That's a fruit that has different colors and shades. Love, joy, peace. And one of the things is when you find miserable people and depressed people, they typically are people that have become introspective and gone in on themselves and they're over in their corner.

They're not really thinking about other people. It can happen. I'm not saying for certain, but brethren, in the self-absorption, people can become so self-centered that you totally forget love and that there's others in the battle too.

And not having that love, the joy and the peace are forfeited. I mean, listen, there's not a child of God that is going to be exempted from this. And he attacks all Christians.

The truth is, do you know the struggles I have? No, we could talk about them and we should be talking to each other about them. But the reality is you don't really know the struggles that I have because you haven't been in my shoes. And I don't really know exactly the ones that you have because I haven't been in your shoes.

But one thing we can... One thing I can assume, if you're a Christian, you're under attack. And you're going to have seasons when it's going to be dark. It's going to be hard.

You're going to fight coldness. You're going to fight. You're going to fight.

There's going to be times when you're groaning and when you're... This is part of being a Christian. And I remember hearing a story. I was going to ask my wife who this was because I couldn't remember right off and I don't remember if my wife even... She might have been the one that actually told me about this.

But I remember hearing a story about two ladies. And I don't know if these are actual sisters from the church at home. I couldn't place the story but I think it's well worth telling.

They had two sisters and they're talking to each other. And one of them is expressing her problems to the other sister and how deep her trials are. And she said, something like, Sister, I wish I could be like you.

It just seems like you don't ever have any struggles. And that other sister just burst into tears. Because the reality is sometimes we can present ourselves... Sometimes you have people that on the outside, they look like they've got it all together.

But on the inside, they're being tormented. They're going through difficulties that you can't imagine. We're wired differently.

Some people wear things on their shirt sleeve. Some people not so much. But the fact is, often the guy who sits there seeming to be the most stable and solid is the guy that all of a sudden just, he falls out.

He collapses. I can remember the first church that I was a member of down in Texas when I moved down there. I remember the pastor saying, I wish everybody in the church could be like so-and-so.

Like their family has it all. If you look at that family today, oh, it's bad. I'll tell you this, anybody that's been in the ministry, but it's not just limited to men in the ministry.

And it's not just limited to missionaries that are out there in the front lines. It's every single person that bears this testimony of Jesus Christ. The devil is after you.

He is going to jump on you. He is going to attack you. I mean, such response.

What trials? I know that nobody can know what it is to be a pastor in a church or a pastor's wife unless you've stood in their shoes. But we're all under attack, one way or another. And He's coming for each of us.

And God's the only one that can help us. And that's why the need to cry out on each other's behalf. God, give this church intercessors.

We need people who pray for each other. Listen, if you come across people and you find out that they're struggling to even pray and maintain a prayer life, that's troublesome and problematic. Because you know what? If somebody is barely figuring out how to go to God and make supplication for themselves, I'll tell you, those who faithfully intercede for God's people, they're desperately needed.

Now, pick up reading with me at the end of verse 18. Notice the basic thrust of how this leads into 19 and 20. Making supplication for all the saints, also for me.

You see, Paul wants prayer for himself. That's what 19 and 20 are basically about. Paul asking prayer for himself.

Paul greatly desires that these Ephesian Christians would remember him. And there's only one reason why. Now listen, I did a series years back on hyper-Calvinism, and I see it everywhere.

Reformed circles are full of practical hyper-Calvinists. They'll never admit it, but they are. And one of the places that it comes out is in prayer.

Why? Because basically we go to Scripture and we recognize this. We recognize that God does many things, and God is active, and God is sovereign, and God is all-powerful, and God is infinite, and God

knows everything. And we're specifically told by the Lord Jesus Christ that God knows what we need before we even ask.

You see, what happens is we start thinking God is sovereign, God knows what we need before we even ask, and so we begin to downplay the necessity of prayer. That's what happens in hyper-Calvinism. I despise hyper-Calvinism.

It's a takeaway from human responsibility. It basically says, well, God is sovereign, therefore fill in the blank. We don't need to do this.

We can just passively sit over there. But that is never what Scripture teaches. If you've come to the place where you think that, well, God's sovereign.

He knows what I need before I ask. So this little subtle persuasion creeps in. Prayer can't possibly matter.

Then you know what? You're thinking not like Paul thinks. Why would Paul be so anxious to have these people pray for him? Well, there's only one reason. There's only one.

Listen, do you know what James says? You do not have because you do not ask. Do you know what Jesus taught? Ask and you will receive. When James 4 says that you do not have because you do not ask, that doesn't mean you would have that thing anyway even if you didn't ask because God's sovereign.

That doesn't mean that. He has this plan and He's going to do what He's going to do regardless of whether you pray. The verse doesn't mean the opposite of what it says.

The verse says you don't have because you don't ask. It's not teaching us that it doesn't matter if we ask. That would be the totally... You're wrenching Scripture totally wrong.

That's not what that means. I tell you, ask and it will be given. That means praying to God results in God doing things He wouldn't do if you didn't pray.

You say, I don't believe that. Then you don't believe your Bible because that's exactly what Scripture says. And that's where Paul's coming from.

Oh brethren, I covet your prayers. I covet people's prayers. When I hear that there are people in this world that pray for me regularly, I value that highly because it makes a difference.

And if you recognize your Bibles properly, and here's a great motive to pray for the saints. Why? Because when you pray for saints, things happen that wouldn't happen if you didn't pray. God will do what He would not do if you didn't pray.

And God help us. God help us to remember the missionaries in faraway places. You know, we can get to where we feel pretty lonely right here.

But you know when you're a missionary out there on the front lines, I hear this. You can feel like people have forgotten you. And you know what the truth is? Oftentimes the Christians at home do forget.

You see, we can become so immersed in our own problems that we forget each other. Let alone people in faraway places. Brethren, one of the things that you have to do is you have to go after this.

You have to pursue this. You need to be aware of people that are out there. This needs to be something we need to give ourselves to.

This is something that... I mean, having a time... I know a missionary friend that he has a time, and I believe he told me before, it was at 4 p.m. every day. He has a time set aside for prayer where he only intercedes for others. How often do you think of them? People... I mean, those missionaries that are out there, or other Christians in places of particular difficulty and trial and turmoil.

I mean, there are many... There are Christians that are going... They're hard-pressed. They're carrying terrible loads and heavy burdens, crushing problems. How often do you... Are you remembering people like this? Brethren, this is the encouragement in this message.

Don't always be thinking about yourself. Yes, there's a place to make supplication in your own behalf, but prayer makes a difference. And when you pray for one another, that's what's being called.

Calling out to God for others helps. It makes a difference. And God could run this world without our prayers.

We know that, but He's chosen not to. John Wesley, whose biography I'm reading right now, he believed that there wasn't a thing that happened in this world that wasn't accomplished through prayer. I think that's probably taken it too far, but he was at least... You know what? I'd rather somebody think that way than the other way, because if you think that way, it's not going to make you think that prayer is useless.

It's not going to lead you to some hyper-Calvinism. Brethren, let me ask you this. I'm just going to... Again, I'm going to shoot straight.

The two who have asked for prayer with regards to lack of assurance are Tasha and Beth. And I would just ask you this. What if the whole church went to intercessory prayer for them? And I mean, what if we as a church really covenanted together? You know what? From now until the first of January, I'm going to pray for these two every single day that God would give them a peace, a settled joy in Christ.

I'm going to really pray for this. If there's some kind of spiritual problem there that God would allow them to get to the root of it, and we poured ourselves out, we just covenanted together, we're going to pray for this. We're going to make supplication in behalf of these two saints, and we're going to really go after this.

Do you think perhaps January 1st will roll around and if we ask them, God would do something that He wouldn't have done if we hadn't done that? You see, if you don't think so, then you're not reading this right. Brethren, the importance for us to pray for one another, you can't downplay this. This same missionary that I was just talking about, whose name I'm not supposed to be using, I'm going to try to be disciplined with that.

His wife, he tells this story. His wife says to him, what day is it? He's like, what day is it? It's Thursday. She said, I knew it.

Why? What's the significance? They're in the Far East. You know what Thursday morning is? It's Wednesday evening in the United States when all those churches that they plead with to pray for them are getting together in their corporate prayer meetings and getting on their knees and praying for this couple. She says, I know it.

Why? Because she can feel it. Suddenly there's a clarity. There's a joy.

There's a freedom with all those brethren back in the States praying for them. Brethren, do you realize feeling you're having an unusually hard time and everything's against you and it's enough to drive you to despair. One of the best remedies for you may be just to sit down and say, what about so and so? And begin praying for others.

Brethren, you do recognize what these Ephesian Christians are being called to do. They're being called to pray for one another when he full well knows that each of them individually are under an attack from these cosmic forces. You see, what he's telling them to do is while you're being attacked and you're in the warfare and you're putting the armor on and the devil is slamming you and he's coming and you're watching for him, you need to be praying for each other.

That means we got to come out of ourselves. That means that, listen, love is the opposite of selfishness. We're just not going to be self-consumed.

If there's anything healing and healthy in your life, it's when you think about others and the needs of others, the problems of others, the trials of others, the difficulties of others. Not when we look at people and we look at them like, what problems? I don't have any problems. And what did Paul want? What did Paul really want prayer for? You recognize this guy's in jail and he didn't ask to be set free.

What did he ask? Give me boldness. That's what he wanted. Paul knew the power that was set against him.

He knew the devil coming against him. With everything that he could have asked for, he wants boldness and powerful utterance of the gospel. I would just ask you this, do you pray for the preachers of the gospel? I mean, including Sonny when he goes down there to Manchester City Center.

Pray for these men. I've seen, as I've gotten to know these guys, these pastors around the UK, small churches, average size is 40 people. They're barely able to pay them.

You talk about a bunch of guys that look to me like there's a lot of discouragement in their life. We should know their names. We should be filing through those names.

We should be remembering those names. We should be getting to know them. You know one of the reasons why I want, after coming back, why I want to file these guys through the pulpit here, maybe have conferences and bring them all in, is just so you can get to know them because it's hard to pray for people you don't know.

That's one of the things about missionaries. If you really want to get a burden for something, you need to get to know. Ignorance doesn't help us to be really burdened for praying for these things.

But do you pray for preachers of the gospel? Do you realize what happens? I can barely put into words the kind of things that I've experienced trying to lead the church back in San Antonio when we've come upon seasons where we've launched new missionaries or launched new church planting endeavors or launched new evangelistic things. Do you know what happens? Do you know what kind of attacks come when we set ourselves to launch out into some new soul-winning endeavor with the gospel? Do you realize what happens every time a man even takes the pulpit? Do you recognize the kinds of things? He's frail. He's feeble.

He's weak. He's fallible. Listen, the last thing we need coming from the pulpit is political correctness.

Or I hope he doesn't offend anybody today. You really want to be praying for what Paul wanted prayer for? We want to pray that men in this land will stand up and be bold. Like even at a time like this, they'll stand up and say it how it is.

Do we have to have the church that tells us to meet? God, help us to have men that will have this kind of passion to stand up. If you say, well, I don't like that. Well, then, you don't like what Paul likes and what Paul's praying for.

One of the greatest things we need in the UK today is we need some preachers with gut who stand up and preach the Word of God. That's what we need. But you know what? We're asking that to come from men who are weak and who in a lot of these churches... I heard one... I'm hearing some of these guys say, you know, if we go through this whole lockdown thing and I keep the church open and you got some deacons in the church that don't like it and they try to run me out, it's like, you know, my house is the manse.

I've got two children and a wife and I'm barely hanging on getting paid by what I get paid by the church and I don't know what would happen. I know one thing that ought to happen. I told Dale, I said, you know, you guys know about anybody that that happens to.

You need to let all the churches know because we need to come alongside and we need to help people like that. Brethren, here it is. Pray that the preachers would have boldness and power in truth.

Pray. Here it is. Make supplication for all the saints.

And I just leave you with this. As much as you do this to one of the least of Christ's people, you do it unto Him. And on that day, you can change Matthew 25 a lot of ways because there's more than just feeding and visiting.

It will be said, I was needy and I was under attack and you prayed for me. You made supplication for me. Lord, when did we do that? As much as you prayed for Beth and Natasha, you prayed for me.

And then those on his left. I was needy and you did not pray for me. Lord, when? Father, I pray that you would give intercessors and an army of intercessors in this church.

Please give us prayer warriors. Please. I pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Well, brethren, I trust that you will all run well over the next nine weeks of my absence. And I can't hardly even hope that the quarantine will be lifted.

The two-week quarantine. I'm hoping the lockdown will be. I have very little hope that the two-week quarantine will.

But if you think about us, we'll be there and at our home, Lord willing, on the 5th of January with Papa. And please, as I'm just preaching on supplication for all the saints, please do remember us in prayer. Just in the different things that we have to do when we go back.

And you can know we will be remembering you in prayer. Especially during this season. I am praying for you all by face and by name that you press on and run well.

And that God be with you. Amen. You're dismissed.

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